

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00093 060617Z
ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 USIA-15 /029 W
-----060626Z 087940 /12

R 060402Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9596
INFO AMCONSUL SYDNEY
AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

UNCLAS CANBERRA 0093

SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE FOR USIS

DEPT FOR CU/ARTS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL
SUBJ: PERFORMING ARTISTS TOURING ABROAD

1. ANTHONY STEELE, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF ADELAIDE FESTIVAL (AND FESTIVAL CENTER), CALLED TO INFORM US THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A COMMUNICATION FROM THE BLACK EARTH PERCUSSION GROUP FROM NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PROPOSING THAT THEY, AS PART OF 1978 ASIAN TOUR, APPEAR IN THE ADELAIDE FESTIVAL, WHICH TAKES PLACE MARCH THAT YEAR. GROUP'S LETTER REFERRED TO PREVIOUS CU/ARTS CO-SPONSORSHIP AND HOPE THAT SIMILAR ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING IN 1978.

2. STEELE IS REPLYING TO THE GROUP THAT MARCH, 1978 IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND WOULD BE A DISASTER SINCE ABC AND MUSICA VIVA HAVE ALREADY CONTRACTED FOR CONCERTS BY THE PERCUSSIONS OF STRASBOURG AT EXACTLY THAT TIME. STRASBOURG GROUP ALREADY SIGNED UP FOR ADELAIDE FESTIVAL.

3. IN SAME CONVERSATION, STEELE MADE A PITCH FOR CU ASSISTANCE, IF IN FACT CU WERE TO SPONSOR SOME PERFORMING UNCLASSIFIED

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GROUP IN EA AREA, SPRING OF 1978, TO ENABLE TWYLA THARP DANCE COMPANY TO APPEAR AT ADELAIDE FESTIVAL. NO FORMAL REQUEST WAS MADE TO US, AND WE MAKE NONE TO CU UNTIL FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS EXCHANGED BETWEEN THARP AND STEELE AND TERMS BETTER KNOWN. THARP GROUP MENTIONED ON PAGE SIX OF DEPARTMENT'S A-6004.

4. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, POST VERY IMPRESSED WITH ARTISTIC SUCCESS OF PREVIOUS ADELAIDE FESTIVALS, WITH THE HIGH INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION THIS FESTIVAL ENJOYS, AND WITH COMPETENCE OF STEELE AND OTHERS IN FESTIVAL MANAGEMENT. ANDREW PORTER IN "THE NEW YORKER" TERMED ADELAIDE "ONE OF THE TINY HANDFUL OF GREAT MUSIC FESTIVALS OF THE WORLD". IT IS IMPERATIVE IN OUR VIEW THAT AMERICAN REPRESENTATION OF THE HIGH ARTISTIC CALIBRE OF, SAY, TWYLA THARP OR OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE, OR MERCE CUNNINGHAM, (WHO APPEARED IN 1976) BE CONTINUED, WITHOUT USG FINANCIAL SUPPORT, IF NONE ABSOLUTELY NEEDED, BUT WITH THAT SUPPORT IF OTHERWISE THE U.S. WOULD GO UNREPRESENTED OR REPRESENTED BY LESS THAN HIGHEST ARTISTIC STANDARDS.

5. SHOULD CU/ARTS SUPPORT FOR 1978 ADELAIDE FESTIVAL EVENTUATE, POST WOULD APPRECIATE BEING BROUGHT INTO NEGOTIATIONS AT EARLIEST STAGE ACTING AS THE DEPARTMENT'S NEGOTIATOR. FOR THE 1976 FESTIVAL, STEELE DEALT DIRECTLY WITH CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE AND WITH DEPARTMENT WITH RESULT THAT STEELE UNDERSTANDABLY, WAS PRIMARILY, AND ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY, INTERESTED IN HIS OWN FESTIVAL, WITH REST OF AUSTRALIAN TOUR SUFFERING. AS YOU AWARE, ENSEMBLE WANTED TO PLAY AT SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE, AND WE WANTED THEM TO, AS U.S. BICENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE, BUT STEELE COULD NOT NEGOTIATE THIS MAINLY BECAUSE HIS REAL INTEREST DIDN'T EXTEND BEYOND ADELAIDE. HAD POST BEEN IN ON NEGOTIATIONS WE COULD HAVE INSISTED THAT, AS A CONDITION FOR APPEARING IN ADELAIDE, PROPER ARRANGEMENTS BE MADE IN MELBOURNE, CANBERRA AND SYDNEY AS WELL, WHICH WAS NOT THE CASE IN 1976.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Office: ACTION CU
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3654512
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PERFORMING ARTISTS TOURING ABROAD
TAGS: SCUL, AS, BLACK EARTH PERCUSSION GROUP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e178b8dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009